



A federal judge in California has ruled that the government is responsible for the well-being of migrant children who are waiting in makeshift encampments on the California side of the U.S.-Mexico border.

U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee issued an order Wednesday evening directing federal agents to stop holding minors at the open-air sites while they wait for their turn to make their case to the U.S. Border Patrol, and to move the children “expeditiously” to facilities better suited for their care.

The ruling came after advocates called on Gee to intervene. They said that the way Border Patrol agents monitor the sites and limit migrants’ movement means children there are effectively in government custody, so the government is legally obligated to protect their welfare. Gee agreed.

Leecia Welch, deputy legal director at [Children’s Rights](#) and one of the lawyers representing children in the case, said she was gratified with the court’s ruling.

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